

IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGES STATE ACCREDITATION GUIDE

FISCAL YEAR 2012



COMMUNITY COLLEGES &
WORKFORCE PREPARATION

**IOWA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Phone: 515-281-8260

Fax: 515-281-6544

www.state.ia.us/educate

Roger Utman, Ph.D.

Administrator

515-281-8260

roger.utman@iowa.gov

Colleen Hunt

Bureau Chief

515-281-0319

colleen.hunt@iowa.gov

Jeremy Varner

Consultant

515-281-3866

jeremy.varner@iowa.gov

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building

Des Moines, Iowa

50319-0146

State Board of Education

Rosie Hussey, President, Clear Lake

Charles C. Edwards, Jr., Vice President, Des Moines

Sister Jude Fitzpatrick, West Des Moines

Eric Goranson, Des Moines

Michael L. Knedler, Council Bluffs

Valorie J. Kruse, Sioux City

Ana Lopez, Pella

Max Phillips, Woodward

LaMetta Wynn, Clinton

Corey Anderson, Student Member, Norwalk

Administration

Jason Glass, Director and Executive Officer

of the State Board of Education

Gail M. Sullivan, Chief of Staff

Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

Roger Utman, Ph.D., Division Administrator

**Bureau of Community Colleges and
Career and Technical Education Services**

Colleen Hunt, Bureau Chief

Jeremy Varner, Consultant

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the *Iowa Code* sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688) Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E 14th St, Des Moines IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 N. Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL 60606-7204.

Foreword

Dear Community College Educator,

Following lengthy study, the Iowa Department of Education is pleased to share the guidelines for the revised state accreditation process for community colleges.

The state's accreditation process confirms each college is offering students quality programs and services consistent with state standards. Accreditation assures the public that its tax-supported educational institutions are operating at expected levels of efficiency and effectiveness.



The evaluation process for FY 2012 has changed significantly from prior years. Following the recommendations of the Iowa Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee, the department has overhauled the process to make it more focused and efficient. The changes enhance the value of the process and ensure robust oversight, while diminishing the burden of visits on colleges by reducing duplication with the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation process.

As in the past, the department has benefited greatly from the willingness of Iowa's community college educators to share their views regarding accreditation and institutional improvement during the process of revising the accreditation guidelines. The department is particularly grateful to the Accreditation Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from each of the state's 15 community colleges, for overseeing changes to the process.

This document provides an overview of the accreditation process, requirements in state law, department guidelines, and other information.

Jason Glass

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason E. Glass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Director
Iowa Department of Education

This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

History of State Accreditation Process	6
Overview of Accreditation	8
Evaluation Schedule	9
Steps in the State Accreditation Process	10
The State Review Team	13
Recommended Timeline	15
Higher Learning Commission Standards	16
Additional State Standards	18
Special Topics	22
State Accreditation Report Format	23
The Accreditation Advisory Committee	24
State Laws Governing Accreditation	25

A Brief History of Iowa's State Accreditation Process

The state accreditation process for Iowa's community colleges has evolved since its establishment two decades ago. Developed collaboratively with the colleges and continuously changing, the process ensures state standards are satisfied while avoiding duplication with other evaluation processes.

The changing role of community colleges in higher education and increasing emphasis on institutional effectiveness led to the passage of legislation in 1990 requiring the creation of a state accreditation process for Iowa's community colleges. This legislation outlined requirements for new standards and a process for accrediting community colleges that addressed issues of quality, access, accountability, and institutional improvement.

In the spring of 1991, the Iowa Department of Education established a cross-departmental work team to coordinate development of the accreditation process and standards. The team's philosophy held that rather than being prescriptive, the new standards should provide goals toward which colleges should strive, including those qualities that characterize the best in community college education. The team also decided that community college involvement was essential to the success of this project and, therefore, organized a task force on accreditation and program review made up of community college chief academic officers. An accreditation advisory committee – including representatives of business and industry, government, and other stakeholder groups – was formed to gather broad community input.

By October 1992, the work team and the task force had reached consensus on a preliminary set of 47 standards. Each standard was accompanied by a rationale to clarify its purpose. Input on these preliminary standards was sought through 15 open forums conducted across the state in late 1992. The work team and taskforce used the input to make revisions. In order to move away from the concept of minimum accreditation standards and assist in communicating the institutional improvement focus of the accreditation process, the *Preliminary Accreditation Standards* were renamed the *State Criteria for Evaluation of Iowa Community Colleges*. The State Board of Education approved 36 state criteria and a pilot process in June 1994. Information from the pilot process in 1995 and 1996 resulted in a recommendation from community college personnel that the number of criteria be reduced through consolidation of similar criteria. In August 1997, the State Board of

Education adopted 18 criteria. The rules for community college accreditation became effective on October 1, 1997.

The development of the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) and a major revision of the commission's accreditation criteria in early 2005 prompted extensive changes in Iowa's community college accreditation guidelines and to administrative rules governing community college accreditation. Most significant was a new alignment of Iowa's accreditation criteria and core components with those of the HLC. For more than a decade, the accreditation cycles of the HLC and the department have been



incident. The content of the respective accreditation processes was the same, whether a college had adopted HLC's AQIP process or continued to prepare for accreditation review using the commission's more traditional Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ).

Since the inception of the state accreditation process, the state has set additional standards beyond those set by the HLC. These standards have changed over time. For example, in 2003, the state eliminated community college faculty licensure and implemented the quality faculty plan process to ensure the competence of instructors. In 2007 and 2008, legislation was passed expanding state accreditation standards for faculty qualifications and the quality faculty plan process.

In 2008, the 82nd General Assembly mandated a comprehensive study of accreditation and accountability mechanisms. The department was directed to review the accreditation process and the compliance requirements contained in the

accreditation criteria. The review was required to consider measures to ensure consistency in program quality statewide, provide adequate State Board of Education oversight of community college programming, ensure consistency in definitions for data collection, identify barriers to providing quality programming, identify methods to improve compensation of faculty, and develop system performance measures that adequately respond to needs and concerns. The bill also required the department to look at accreditation processes and system performance measures from other states and regions.

The Iowa Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee was reconvened to conduct the mandated review. The committee included individuals representing the various functional units of community colleges including presidents, chief academic officers, faculty, human resource administrators, business officers, student services administrators, and academic deans. Membership included at least one member from each college and was balanced between PEAQ and AQIP institutions.

Because of the wide scope of the study, work teams were established, each addressing a portion of the mandate. The work teams included program quality, data quality and reporting, faculty remuneration, and national review of state accreditation and review processes. In conducting the review, the department collaborated with community college quality faculty plan committees.

The Iowa Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee developed recommendations which the department included in the final report provided to the legislature in January 2010. The report recommended an overhaul of the state accreditation process to make it more focused and efficient while reaffirming Iowa's approach to ensuring state standards are met through peer review. Recommendations included removing duplication with the HLC accreditation process by focusing state reviews on standards in state law not reviewed by the HLC and issues identified by the state or colleges. Additionally, enhanced pre-visit desk reviews and streamlined interim visits were recommended to reduce the time and cost of site visits.

The department accepted the recommendations of the report and of the advisory committee and began overhauling the state accreditation process and review protocol. In 2010, the legislature mandated the department review its implementation of the recommendations provided to the legislature and to present findings and recommendations by December 31, 2010.

While the state accreditation process was being modified, the HLC released information about a plan to transition to a new model for continued accreditation. The new model separates threshold standards from continuous improvement and is intended to increase public confidence in accreditation as a mechanism for quality assurance. Under the new model, PEAQ is to be replaced with a new Open Pathway, while AQIP remains unchanged. As under the previous model, HLC



standards will remain the same regardless of the model selected.

The current administrative rules for the state accreditation process, effective May 12, 2010, set the standards for Iowa's community colleges as the HLC's five criteria and a number of additional state requirements, including minimum faculty standards, faculty load, special needs, career and technical program review, strategic planning, physical plant and facilities, quality faculty plan, and Senior Year Plus standards.

The department expects to propose and promulgate changes to the administrative rules for state accreditation in 2011. The most significant proposed change to the process is to decouple the schedule of HLC visits from state accreditation evaluations.

As the department implements changes to the accreditation process, it will continuously seek feedback from stakeholders. The Iowa Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee will continue to play an important role in assisting with the development of review protocol and providing feedback to the department.

An Overview of Community College Accreditation

The purpose of accreditation of Iowa's community colleges is to confirm each college is offering quality programs and services consistent with state standards.

Accreditation assures the public that its tax-supported educational institutions are operating at expected levels of efficiency and effectiveness. This is especially important with respect to the colleges' mission to address the economic well-being of Iowa through improved workforce preparation and to prepare community college students for transfer to baccalaureate institutions.

State law sets the accreditation standards for Iowa's community colleges. These standards include the accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) as well as additional state standards.

HLC Accreditation

Iowa's community colleges are accredited by the State of Iowa as well as a regional accreditor. Regional accreditation is the primary means by which American colleges and universities assure quality to students and the public.

Accreditation is a process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges for quality assurance and improvement. Relying on institutional self-evaluation, peer review, and institutional response, it evaluates formal educational activities as well as other activities essential to the effectiveness of a college, such as governance and financial stability.

Accredited status is required for access to federal funds, including student financial aid. Regional accreditors are reviewed and recognized by the United States Department of Education to ensure the requirements of the Higher Education Act are evaluated. Iowa's community colleges are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC).

The HLC currently supports two alternative processes by which postsecondary educational institutions can maintain their institutional accreditation – Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). With this revision of the *Guide for State Accreditation of Iowa Community Colleges*, the Iowa Department of Education accepts either HLC-approved accreditation process.

PEAQ adheres to key elements of a traditional approach to accreditation. PEAQ begins with an institutional self-study,

relies on peer review, focuses on decision-making processes, and operates on a ten-year cycle.

AQIP operates on a seven-year cycle. More significantly, AQIP adheres to continuous quality improvement principles derived from the Baldrige National Quality Program. Before its acceptance into AQIP, an institution conducts an intensive self-assessment – similar in nature to PEAQ's self-study – followed by an HLC-conducted strategy forum where the institution

plans three or more action projects to help it meet key goals identified in its self-assessment. The self-assessment and action projects become part of the institution's systems portfolio which is reviewed and approved prior to the institution's acceptance into AQIP. During the seven years of its AQIP cycle, an institution is required to provide HLC with annual updates about its systems portfolio. These updates detail progress on current action projects (three years is the typical duration of each action project) and on the systems portfolio in general.

Both AQIP and PEAQ evaluate the same accreditation criteria and core components as specified by HLC. AQIP procedures require that data collected for a systems portfolio be reframed to address the criteria and core components.

The HLC is currently in the process of developing a new model for continued accreditation. Beginning in 2012-2013, the PEAQ model is expected to be phased out and replaced with pathway models. AQIP will remain as a pathway for institutions to continue accreditation. The four pathways will include the Candidacy Pathway, Foundational Pathway, AQIP Pathway, and Open Pathway.

The pathways are expected to separate threshold standards from continuous improvement elements.

The Candidacy Pathway is for institutions seeking initial candidacy and is on a two-year cycle (similar to the current candidacy process). The Foundational Pathway is on a five-year cycle and is expected to be required of all institutions granted initial accreditation, as well as those not meeting the conditions for the Open Pathway or the AQIP Pathway. These conditions may include substantial changes in the institution or failure to meet certain requirements. The Candidacy and Foundational Pathways are expected to entail more intensive review than other pathways.

Most Iowa community colleges are expected to utilize the Open Pathway or AQIP Pathway to maintain accredited status. As with the PEAQ model it replaces, the Open Pathway will



be on a ten-year cycle. The pathway will include an assurance review process and a continuous improvement process which entails a quality initiative determined by the institution.

State Accreditation

Iowa's state accreditation process for community colleges dovetails with the Higher Learning Commission's AQIP and PEAQ accreditation processes, as well as the proposed pathway processes.

The state evaluation process is designed to build off of HLC processes to avoid duplication. State review teams utilize documentation from the HLC to determine whether HLC standards are met. Additional state standards, not evaluated by HLC, are reviewed through the state evaluation process.

Like the proposed pathways under HLC, state accreditation has two components: an assurance component and a continuous improvement component. The former includes an evaluation of an institution's compliance with state standards not reviewed by the HLC and a review of documentation that demonstrates HLC standards are met. Examples of state standards reviewed through the assurance component of the review include faculty qualifications, faculty load, strategic planning, and career and technical program review.

The latter is more flexible and includes a peer review of a topic(s) of interest to the college. The intent of the special topic review is for an institution to have the opportunity to have peers with expertise in a particular issue review specific practices on campus and offer recommendations to enhance activities at the institution. The continuous improvement component does not involve sanctions and may or may not involve public reporting.

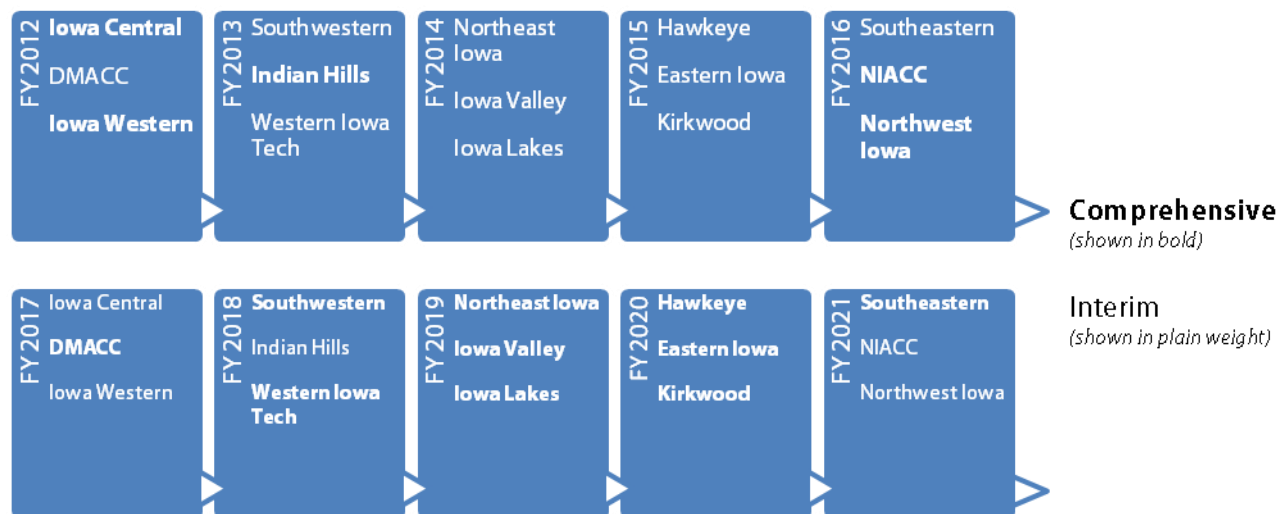
State review teams consist of department staff, as well as administrators and faculty members from peer institutions. Upon completion of the evaluation, a report is prepared and presented to the State Board of Education. The board is charged with accrediting Iowa community colleges.

As recommended by the Iowa Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee, the department expects to promulgate administrative rules decoupling the calendars of HLC reviews and state evaluations beginning in Fiscal Year 2012. Regardless of an institution's HLC accreditation pathway or placement in the accreditation process, state evaluations will occur on a ten-year cycle with interim evaluations on the fifth year and comprehensive evaluations on the tenth year (see below).

Evaluation Schedule

The proposed evaluation schedule (see below) decouples state accreditation evaluations from the HLC site visit schedule since it is no longer necessary for both reviews to occur within the same year. The department expects to promulgate administrative rules in the spring to allow for this change. The rotation will begin in FY 2012 once the administrative rules are amended.

The schedule is based on a ten-year cycle with comprehensive evaluations on the tenth year and interim evaluations on the fifth year. Three colleges will be reviewed each year so that all 15 colleges are evaluated at least once every five years. Colleges were placed into the proposed schedule based on the time since their last interim or comprehensive accreditation evaluation.



Steps in the State Accreditation Process

The state accreditation process includes both comprehensive and interim evaluations and may include focus evaluations at the director of the Iowa Department of Education's discretion. The process assures institutional quality and dovetails with the other accountability processes.

Comprehensive Evaluations

The comprehensive accreditation evaluation (review) is conducted on a ten-year cycle with interim evaluations occurring on the fifth year.

The comprehensive evaluation includes a desk review of documentation which can be shared electronically, as well as a site visit. The site visit is expected to be approximately two days in length, but may be longer depending on the needs of the review team.

Comprehensive evaluations include both an assurance component and a continuous improvement component. The assurance component includes a review of compliance with state standards, including HLC criteria and additional state standards. HLC criteria are evaluated through a review of the most recent HLC accreditation report and other relevant documentation. State standards not reviewed by the HLC are evaluated by the team through a combination of document review and interviews. The continuous improvement component of the comprehensive review consists of a peer review of a special topic(s) identified by the college. Colleges are not sanctioned based on the continuous improvement component; its inclusion in the final report to the State Board of Education is at the college's discretion.

State evaluations have four phases: pre-evaluation preparation, desk review, site visit, and reporting.

Steps Prior to a Comprehensive Evaluation:

- The department distributes the *Iowa Community College State Accreditation Guide* approximately one year in advance of the comprehensive review site visit.
- The community college reports to the department any special topic(s) it wishes to receive special attention during the state review.
- The department convenes a state accreditation review team.
- The department generates a report using the Community College Management Information System (MIS). This report, titled *Community College Profile*, provides summative data about the institution.

Desk Review

The desk review portion of the state evaluation is intended to allow review teams to conduct as much of the evaluation as possible prior to a site visit. Steps in the desk review phase of the evaluation include:

Accreditation Process

HLC Process



HLC Review Conducted

HLC criteria reviewed by team of peers; report issued with findings and recommendations regarding continued accreditation.



State Review Conducted

Review team selected



DE Staff



College Peers



Pre-visit desk review
of data and documents conducted; HLC report reviewed.



Site visit review

Approx. one day on-site for interim visits

Approx. two days on-site for full visits



Team Reviews:

State Standards

- ♦ Minimum Faculty Standards
- ♦ Faculty Load
- ♦ Strategic Plan
- ♦ CTE Program Review
- ♦ Quality Faculty Plan
- ♦ Senior Year Plus

HLC Standards: Issues Identified by HLC Report

Special Topic Identified by the College



Report to college and State Board of Education with team findings and recommendations regarding continued accreditation.

State Accreditation Process

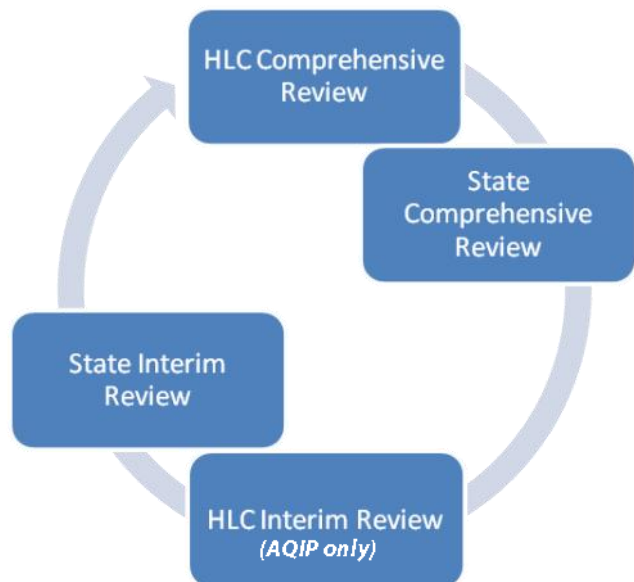
- All information requested by the department for the desk review is provided by the college. This includes institutional plans (e.g., quality faculty plan, institutional strategic plan) and other documents that can be shared electronically.
- The community college seeking reaccreditation shares the report generated following its most recent HLC accreditation review and all communications from the HLC since the last state evaluation. The department may request additional documentation demonstrating the college has addressed concerns raised by the HLC, if any.
- The desk review portion of the comprehensive evaluation is conducted by the review team. The desk review includes a review of the most recent HLC report, which is used to demonstrate whether the institution meets HLC criteria. Other communications between the HLC and the institution will also be reviewed. If significant issues are identified by the HLC, the college shall submit a narrative summary of action taken to remedy the concern and any additional documentation requested by the evaluation team. Minor issues and recommendations of the HLC will not be addressed by the state review team.
- The department utilizes the Community College Management Information System to generate samples for review protocol which require them (e.g., minimum faculty standards and faculty load) and to identify potential compliance issues.
- The department utilizes the database of approved programs to generate a summary of potential compliance issues for the evaluation team to investigate.
- The review team explores potential compliance issues, requesting further information when necessary. Questions not resolved during desk review will be addressed by the team during the site visit.

Site Visit

The site visit portion of the state evaluation is intended to allow review teams to evaluate standards that cannot be reviewed through a desk review (e.g., review of human resources files), conduct interviews as needed, share with one another, and begin creation of the preliminary accreditation report. The site visit is expected to last no longer than two days in most cases, including preliminary report creation. The site visit phase includes the following steps:

- The review team evaluates state standards not evaluated through the desk review or the HLC review. This includes a review of documents which cannot be shared electronically. Interviews with select college personnel may be conducted as a part of review protocol.
- The team follows up on potential compliance issues identified, if any. Follow-up may include review of additional documents or additional interviews with select college personnel. This may also include reviewing documentation that any significant issue(s) identified by the HLC was remedied or that adequate progress is being made on activities implemented as a result of the finding(s). The

State and HLC Accreditation Cycles



team may request the institution provide a written assurance statement in response to an identified concern.

- The team follows up on issues identified during the previous state accreditation visit or documented concerns received by the department, if any.
- The team (or a portion thereof) reviews selected special topic(s).
- The team conducts an exit interview with college administration and anyone else the college identifies (e.g., board of directors, staff) to discuss initial findings. The team reports on special topic(s) review findings and recommendations.

Reporting

During the site visit, the review team prepares a preliminary summative report with findings from the evaluation. This document serves as a draft of the report that will later be submitted to the State Board of Education. The report includes recommendations to the board concerning continued accreditation, as well as findings regarding compliance with state standards. The report may also include a summary of the special topic(s) reviewed at the college's discretion. The reporting phase includes the following steps:

- The review team prepares a preliminary report during the site visit.
- After the visit, in consultation with the review team, the team leader completes the final report.
- The report is provided to the college for review and for correction of errors of fact.
- The report is provided to the director of the Iowa Department of Education for approval. Once approved, the

report is presented to the Community College Council and the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education takes action regarding the institution's accredited status.

- A copy of the final report is submitted to the college. The college may respond to the report. If formal recommendations are made which require action on the part of the college, the department will notify the college and specify required action including timelines. The department may provide technical assistance to the college in areas in which corrective action is necessary. If a recommendation is made for accredited status to be withdrawn resulting from failure to address a problem satisfactorily, the community college has one year to remedy the problem or lose accreditation for that program.

Interim Evaluations

Interim state evaluations are similar to comprehensive evaluations but are more limited in scope. They focus on state standards and issues identified during or since the last state evaluation. Interim evaluations are conducted approximately halfway between comprehensive evaluations (approximately five years before and after comprehensive visits).

The steps are the same as the comprehensive visit; however, review protocols are less thorough and the visits are much shorter in length (only one day, including preliminary report creation). Interim evaluations do not include review of a special topic(s).

The interim evaluation includes a desk review and a site visit of at least one day by the review team (on-site interim visits are required by Iowa Code 260C.47(1)(b)). The length of the visit may vary depending on the institution and the needs of the review team, but in most cases the site visit portion is expected to take no more than one day including preparation of the preliminary report.

As with comprehensive evaluations, a desk review is conducted and includes a review of the most recent HLC report; all significant issues, if any, identified since the last state evaluation; compliance with state standards not reviewed by the HLC; and documented issues received by the department, if any. The site visit includes a review of human resource files and follow-up on any potential issues identified by the team. No interviews will be included as a part of the review protocol for interim visits. Interviews will only be conducted if requested by the review team in response to a potential compliance issue. The review team may also request that the institution provide additional documentation or a written assurance statement in response to an identified concern.

Equity Reviews

The equity review process conducted by the department is separate from the state accreditation process. Generally, statewide, one equity review is conducted each year. The institution is selected based on two criteria: time since the last equity review and identified concerns. Identified concerns may be based on referrals, complaints, or MIS data. The scheduling of state equity reviews is separate from state accreditation evaluations; however, a college has the option of coupling a scheduled equity visit with its state accreditation visit should they happen to fall on the same year. While the equity review process is separate from the state accreditation process, teams evaluate some equity components during state accreditation visits.

Focus Evaluations

With the approval of the director of the department, a focus evaluation may be conducted if the situation at a particular college warrants. Focus evaluations may be recommended by an evaluation team, the State Board of Education, or the director of the department.

Focus evaluations may result from issues identified through the database of approved programs or MIS (annual compliance monitoring is mandated by Iowa Code 260C.47(1)(a)), complaints received by the department, or HLC action (e.g., moving an institution to the Foundational Pathway or other significant HLC action indicating a failure to meet HLC standards or federal compliance requirements). Community colleges shall inform the department of any focus evaluations or additional assurance reviews required by HLC (281—IAC 24.4(6)). Focus evaluations may also occur as a result of repeated citations for a specific standard or as a means to monitor progress remedying a compliance issue identified during a prior state evaluation.

If the department is directed to conduct a focus evaluation, a focus evaluation team will be assembled, consisting of at least two department staff persons; it may also include one or more representatives of peer institutions. The focus evaluation may include a visit to the college or a desk audit. Once initiated, a focus evaluation may be conducted annually until problems are resolved or changes are fully approved and implemented.

The focus evaluation may or may not result in a report, depending on whether action by the State Board of Education is recommended. If significant noncompliance with state standards is identified, the department may refer the issue to the State Board of Education with a recommendation for further action per Iowa Code 260C.47.



The State Accreditation Review Team

Team Composition

Evaluation teams are composed of department staff, one of whom serves as the team leader, and community college personnel. The size of the team will be determined by the size of the institution and the needs of the particular evaluation visit. Comprehensive review teams are notably larger than interim review teams which are very small. Unlike other evaluations, focus review teams may consist only of department staff.

The following process will be used for nomination and selection of team members, although team composition is ultimately determined by the director per Iowa Code 260C.47(1)(b). Team members will receive an orientation, including training in state evaluation procedures and an overview of the state accreditation process.

Team Selection

Comprehensive and interim evaluation teams consist of department staff and individuals from peer community colleges. The department selects team members for evaluations using the following criteria:

- Comprehensive evaluation teams' community college personnel will include at least one administrator and one faculty member.
- Team members will be selected from individuals who have completed department or HLC training as accreditation evaluators. Individuals with HLC expertise will be included on each team, when possible.
- Teams may include members with prior experience on state accreditation teams as well as team members without prior experience.
- All community colleges will be given the opportunity to provide team members over a period of two years.
- Team members may be selected based on expertise in the special topic(s) identified by the college, issues identified by the HLC, or potential issues identified from department data or complaints received.
- The department will seek to maintain gender balance on review teams and to include members with diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds or with disabilities.
- Teams may include representation from other organizations external to higher education (e.g., business and industry) if the expertise is valuable for review of a special topic identified by the college.
- Exceptions may be made to the above criteria to accommodate unique community college accreditation needs.

The size of the team may vary based on the size of the institution and the needs of the particular evaluation. Interim



review teams are notably smaller than comprehensive review teams.

Focus review teams include at least two department staff members and may include one or more individuals from a peer community college(s) who have expertise in the focus issue.

Orientation

The department provides training on the state accreditation process periodically for new members. Additionally, a short orientation may be provided prior to each evaluation.

Compensation

Team members, excluding those from the department, will be compensated for expenses incurred by the college being evaluated. Department team members are compensated by the department.

Responsibilities of the Team Leader

The team leader is a department staff member who coordinates the state evaluation. Responsibilities of the team leader include the following:

- Determining potential team members using criteria listed above under "Team Selection."
- Creating a list of members and conveying names to the community college contact (usually the accreditation chair).
- Reviewing the team membership list with the president and the college's accreditation contact.
- Contacting and confirming each selected team member.
- Reviewing the team membership list with department administration for approval.

Responsibilities of Team Members

The primary responsibility of the accreditation team is to determine whether the institution meets the requirements set forth in the Iowa Administrative Code for state accreditation of community colleges. Individual team member responsibilities include the following:

- Becoming familiar with state standards and reading the accreditation guide and review protocol or procedures provided by the team leader.
- Reviewing all materials provided for the pre-visit desk review. Performing all reviews within the timeframe allotted by the team leader.
- Determining individual questions and concerns, particularly those in the team member's assigned area of responsibility.
- Discussing questions and concerns with fellow team members. Identifying potential issues, if any, for further investigation and documentation (or interviews) necessary to determine compliance (or noncompliance).
- At the start of the site visit, meeting with the team to discuss individual views regarding assigned areas.
- During the site visit, reviewing compliance with standards as assigned and follow-up on assigned areas to determine answers to identified questions or concerns.
- Participating in the entire site visit. Interim and comprehensive visits may begin early in the morning and end late in the afternoon.
- Writing statements with specific supporting documentation for all criteria assigned and participating in the development of the team report.
- Participate in final on-site team meeting to reach consensus regarding the preliminary accreditation report.
- Attending the exit interview.
- Reviewing the final accreditation report prior to its submission to the institution visited.
- Completing an accreditation evaluation form.

Team members' time during the evaluation process also includes the following duties:

- Reviewing documentation.
- Conducting interviews in scheduled blocks of time during the site visit and reviewing information on assigned criteria. The validity of the final team report depends upon quality research and inquiry by each team member.
- Using independent time for reviewing findings and preliminary report writing.
- Participating in introductory team meeting with community college personnel.
- Participating in meetings with team members. Prior to the visit, these may be conducted over the phone or through electronic correspondence.

Team members are expected to demonstrate professionalism in conduct throughout the visit. All discussions held in team meetings are considered confidential and are not to be shared

with anyone outside the team, except as mutually agreed upon. Team members are permitted to share opinions and information with community college personnel as the site visit takes place. However, team members are not permitted to offer advice that may be construed as team recommendations or requirements. Recommendations are the collective decision of the team and are made through the formal report process. There is a difference between opinion and advice, and the department relies on the professionalism of team members to make these distinctions.

The accreditation report, including recommendations for institutional improvement, is written collectively, but the final report itself is prepared by the team leader. The final report is distributed in draft form to team members for corrections and comments before general distribution.

Planning Checklist for the Accreditation Team Leader

The team leader is to fulfill the following:

- Conduct orientation for new evaluators. Request team members to review the *Iowa Community Colleges State Accreditation Guide* and any procedural documents.
- Confirm that all pre-visit materials are received by team members. Distribute necessary information to the team.
- Make assignments of areas of special responsibility for the review.
- Ensure discussion takes place among team members prior to the site visit.
- Make hotel reservations for the site visit and notify team members of the arrangements. Reserve a team meeting room at the hotel, if possible.
- Contact the institution to provide a meeting room for the team on campus.
- Coordinate with the college to put together a detailed schedule for the visit. Arrange for meetings and interviews during the visit.
- Announce the visit and the availability of the team to confer with institutional personnel during "open time."
- Confirm that material needed by the team during its visit has been placed in the team's meeting room on campus or is available electronically.
- Create the accreditation report.

Responsibilities of the Visited Institution

Institutions seeking continued accreditation are expected to meet the following:

- Assigning a contact person.
- Reviewing the proposed membership of the accreditation team.
- Preparing all requested documentation for review by the accreditation team.
- Arranging on-site meetings of the accreditation team members with college personnel as requested.
- Presenting an overview of the college to the review team during the site visit (comprehensive evaluations only).

Recommended Timeline

The general timelines for comprehensive and interim reviews are nearly identical. While the timelines are similar, there are significant differences between the evaluations in terms of the depth and scope of the reviews and the amount of time spent on-site.

Prior to State Evaluation

9 months

The department provides the college with an overview of the accreditation process and the expectations for the evaluation. The college identifies a special topic(s), if applicable.

6 months

The review team is organized. The department selects and invites team members. The college is notified that the team is organized.

5 months

The review team leader contacts the college and makes arrangements for materials to be provided for the pre-visit desk review. The team leader provides materials to team members and explains expectations.

4 months

The pre-visit desk review begins. The college provides requested documents electronically. The team reviews the most recent HLC accreditation report and other documentation provided for the evaluation.

4 months

The team leader contacts the college and makes preliminary arrangements for the evaluation site visit, including lodging (if appropriate), facilities, materials needed for review, and the tentative visit schedule.

1 month

The team leader contacts the college to finalize site visit arrangements.



State Accreditation Site Visit

The site visit is conducted, including document review, interviews, exit interview, and preliminary report creation.

After the State Evaluation

2 weeks

Team members complete reports and submit them to the team leader.

1-2 months

The team leader completes the final draft of the accreditation report and shares it with team members for comment. After it is shared with team members, the team leader provides the report to the college administration for review to address any factual errors. The college submits feedback to the team leader.

3 months

The accreditation report is finalized by the team leader. The final report is circulated to the team and college.

3-4 months

The community college sends a formal response to the department and the review team.

4-5 months

The report is presented to the Community College Council and the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education takes action with regard to the institution's accredited status.

4-5 months

The department notifies the institution of the board's action and provides additional information, if appropriate.

As Determined by the Accreditation Report

If the accreditation report identifies areas of non-compliance that must be remedied on a certain timeline, the following actions may apply.

The college submits a plan for the correction of deficiencies identified in the report. The deadline for correction of the deficiencies under a plan shall be no longer than June 30 of the year following the site visit of the accreditation team (Iowa Code 260C.47(3)).

Before June 30 of the Following Year

The department evaluates corrective action taken by the institution to determine if the previously-identified deficiencies have been corrected (evaluation may be on-site or conducted via desk review).

By July of the Following Year

The department submits a report and its recommendations to the State Board of Education for action. Should the board not grant full accreditation, further actions will follow per Iowa Code 260C.47(5-7).

Required HLC Standards

Iowa Code section 260.48 and 281—IAC 24 sets state standards for accreditation of Iowa community colleges. These include standards set by the HLC and additional state standards addressed in the next section.

The HLC Criteria for Accreditation are included in Iowa Code 260C.48 — these criteria are used to evaluate all institutions of higher education accredited by HLC; however, the models for evaluating institutions (currently, PEAQ and AQIP) utilize different processes.

During state evaluations, the review team examines the HLC accreditation final report and other evidence provided by the college to determine whether HLC standards and federal requirements are met.

HLC Criteria for Accreditation

Criterion 1. Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Criterion 2. Preparing for the Future

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Criterion 3. Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Criterion 4. Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Criterion 5. Engagement and Service

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Institutions maintaining accredited status through PEAQ evaluate these quality assurance criteria. PEAQ institutions conduct a thorough traditional self-study which is examined by peer reviewers.

AQIP

All HLC-accredited institutions must meet identical requirements; however, the processes for maintaining accredited status differ in AQIP from those used in PEAQ. AQIP utilizes nine sets of questions to analyze interrelationships among systems essential to all effective colleges. Although AQIP criteria examine an organization from a different perspective than the HLC's Criteria for Accreditation (used by PEAQ), they ultimately permit an institution to create a body of evidence that demonstrates the fulfillment of the commission's criteria.

AQIP Criteria

Criterion 1. Helping Students Learn

Criterion 2. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

Criterion 3. Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

Criterion 4. Valuing People

Criterion 5. Leading and Communicating

Criterion 6. Supporting Institutional Operations

Criterion 7. Measuring Effectiveness

Criterion 8. Planning Continuous Improvement

Criterion 9. Building Collaborative Relationships

While the processes for maintaining accredited status differ in AQIP from those used in PEAQ, the fundamental requirements remain the same. When a college using AQIP is required to provide evidence that it meets the commission's criteria for accreditation, it can usually reference the same evidence it provided when responding to the nine AQIP criteria. A following crosswalk illustrates the alignment between the commission's five criteria for accreditation and the nine AQIP criteria.

Criteria for Accreditation	AQIP Criteria								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	1	✕	✕	✕		✕			✕
	2				✕		✕	✕	✕
	3	✕		✕		✕	✕	✕	
	4	✕	✕	✕		✕			
	5		✕		✕	✕		✕	✕

HLC Handbook of Accreditation, page 117.

Pathways

The HLC is preparing to change the models available to institutions for seeking and maintaining accreditation. The HLC is proposing to shift to Pathways. The most notable change is a phasing out of the traditional PEAQ model and its replacement with an Open Pathway model. The Open Pathway model is expected to have an assurance review and a continuous improvement component, separating evaluation of federal compliance and the criteria for accreditation from the improvement process. The improvement process is expected to consist of a quality initiative culminating in a results visit by peer reviewers.

State Evaluation of HLC Criteria

The main source of documentation to be used by state review teams to demonstrate that a college is meeting HLC criteria as required by state law is the final report issued by the HLC

after its visit. This is supplemented by the official letter from the HLC stating the college's accreditation status. The department shall be provided with documents provided to HLC by the college and by HLC to the college per 281—IAC 24.4(6). This includes all accreditation reports, additional reviews, documents or communications related to the assurance processes or compliance with federal requirements. The required documentation does not currently include Annual Institutional Data Updates (AIDUs) or the institutional review file.

Other sources of documentation include information provided by the college regarding its response to issues raised by the HLC review. If an issue is identified, the review team may request the institution provide documentation demonstrating that the issue was remedied or is being addressed. This may include a narrative statement explaining how the issue was remedied or what activities have been implemented to address the concern.

Additional State Standards

In addition to HLC criteria, Iowa community colleges are required by state law to meet additional standards to maintain accredited status. These standards are incorporated in Iowa Code section 260C.48 and Iowa Administrative Code 281—IAC 24 and include:

Faculty (Qualifications)
Faculty Load
Special Needs
CTE Program Evaluation
Strategic Planning
Physical Plant and Facilities
Quality Faculty Plan
Senior Year Plus Programs

Protocol for evaluating compliance with state standards are constantly subject to change and, consequently, will be maintained in procedural documents separate from this guide.

Faculty (Qualifications)

All community college-employed instructors who are under contract for at least half-time or more, and by July 1, 2011, all instructors who teach in career and technical education or arts and sciences (including adjuncts) are required to meet minimum faculty standards.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Instructors

CTE instructors shall be registered, certified, or licensed in the occupational area in which the state requires registration, certification or licensure, and shall hold the appropriate registration, certificate, or licenses for the occupational area in which the instructor is teaching, and shall meet either of the two following qualifications:

- (1) A baccalaureate or graduate degree in the area or related area of study or occupational area in which the instructor is teaching classes.
- OR**
- (2) Special training and at least 6,000 hours of recent and relevant work experience in the occupational area or related occupational area in which the instructor teaches classes if the instructor possesses less than a baccalaureate degree.



Each community college must determine what constitutes recent and relevant work experience for CTE instructors. The 6,000 hours of recent and relevant work experience must be industry experience within the occupational area, not teaching experience. The determination of what constitutes each field of instruction or area of study is based on accepted practices of regionally-accredited two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

Arts and Sciences Instructors

Arts and sciences instructors shall meet either of the two following qualifications:

- (1) Possess a master's degree from a regionally-accredited graduate school, and have successfully completed 12 credit hours of graduate level courses in each field of instruction in which the

instructor is teaching. The 12 graduate credit hours may be within the master's degree requirements or independent of the master's degree, but all hours must be within the field of instruction.

OR

- (2) Have two or more years of successful experience in a professional field or area in which the instructor is teaching classes and in which post-baccalaureate recognition or professional licensure is necessary for practice, including but not limited to the fields or areas of accounting, engineering, law, law enforcement, and medicine.

The determination of what constitutes each field of instruction is based on accepted practices of regionally-accredited two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

Exempt Instructors

State faculty credential requirements do not apply to developmental education and adult education instructors teaching only courses that are not intended to transfer or to complete a degree. If these instructors are teaching credit courses reported in arts and sciences or CTE, it has been recommended that they meet the minimum standards for instructors in those areas. By July 1, 2011, all instructors teaching credit courses shall meet minimum standards.

Minimum faculty standards do not apply to instructors of non-credit courses.

Concurrent Enrollment Instructors

Concurrent enrollment instructors must meet the same requirements as adjunct instructors within the academic area employed by the college. Concurrent enrollment instructors must meet state minimum faculty standards (as of July 1, 2011), as well as college hiring requirements for adjunct faculty in the discipline.

Additional information may be found on the quality faculty section of the department's [website](#).



Faculty Load

The teaching loads of full-time instructors must not exceed the faculty load limits set forth in Iowa law.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Instructors

The full-time teaching load of an instructor in career education programs shall not exceed six hours per day, and an aggregate of 30 hours per week or the equivalent. An instructor may also teach the equivalent of an additional three credit hours, provided the instructor consents to this additional assignment. When the teaching assignment includes classroom subjects (non-laboratory), consideration shall be given to establishing the teaching load more in conformity with that of college parallel instructors.

College Parallel (Arts and Sciences) Instructors

The full-time teaching load of an instructor in college parallel programs shall not exceed a maximum of 16 credit hours within a traditional semester or the equivalent. An instructor may also have a teaching assignment outside of the normal school hours, provided the instructor consents to this additional assignment and the total workload does not exceed the equivalent of 18 credit hours within a traditional semester or the equivalent thereof.

Note: In 2010, legislation was passed allowing certain instructors to exceed the limit set forth in state law for Fiscal Year 2011. Instructors who can be shown to have exceeded the legal limit in prior years were allowed to exceed the current limit without violating the law. A working group was tasked with reviewing faculty load requirements and submitting recommendations to the legislature by December 31, 2010. The [final report](#) included the following recommendation to amend Iowa Code section 260C.48:

Standards developed shall include a provision that the full-time teaching load of an instructor in arts and sciences courses shall be 15 credit hours per semester or equivalent and the maximum academic workload shall be 16 credit hours per semester or equivalent. An instructor may also have an additional teaching assignment, provided the instructor and the administration mutually consent to this additional assignment and that the total teaching load does not exceed 22 credit hours per semester or the equivalent.

As a statutory requirement, the faculty load standard may only be changed through legislative action. If a change occurs, the department will promulgate administrative rules effective for Fiscal Year 2012. The proposed change would not impact load limits for career and technical instructors.

Special Needs

Community colleges shall maintain equal access in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities shall be given access to the full range of course offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations.



CTE Program Evaluation

There are a variety of state requirements related to the offering of career and technical education (CTE) programs. The standards are included in Iowa Code Chapter 258, 281—IAC 46.7(4), and 281—IAC 24.5(4).

Standards for CTE programs include numerous requirements related to program and award length, program content, labor market demand, articulation, advisory committees, and more. All CTE programs (including changes to existing programs) must be approved by the department. The department maintains a database of approved programs for this purpose. Standards for CTE programs are included in [Program Approval: Guidelines for Iowa Community Colleges](#) on the department's [website](#).

Additionally, community colleges are required to review at least 20 percent of the institution's CTE programs annually. The department reviews and approves institutional CTE program review processes through the state accreditation process. Standards for CTE program review are included in the [guidelines for program approval](#) on the department [website](#).

Strategic Planning

Community colleges are required to maintain a five-year strategic plan to guide the institution and its decision-making. Consideration must be given to the five-year statewide strategic plan as required by Iowa Code section 256.31(4)(a) in the development of the institutional plan.

The department has proposed legislation to remove the statutory requirement for a statewide strategic plan. The department expects to set expectations for institutional strategic plans when new administrative rules are promulgated in 2011 and effective for Fiscal Year 2012. The Iowa Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee will recommend to the department expectations and evaluation protocol for institutional strategic plans and planning processes. The rule change is also expected to include language to allow institutional strategic plans to vary in length rather than requiring them to be five-year plans.

Physical Plant and Facilities

Each community college shall present evidence of adequate planning, including a board-approved facilities plan. Planning includes tentative program approval a master campus plan, written educational specifications, site plot showing the location of proposed and existing facilities, elevations, and floor plans.

All new or remodeled facilities (buildings and programs offered in such facilities) and services in such facilities shall be made functional and usable for persons with special needs and shall comply with Iowa Code Chapter 104A and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101), and address issues of campus safety and security as required by Iowa Code Chapter 260C and the federal Clery Act (20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)). All parking areas and roads shall comply with all state and federal rules and regulations dealing with roads, parking ramps, and accessibility requirements.

All administrative facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and related facilities shall be educationally adequate for the purpose for which they are designed.

A library or resource center shall be planned as part of the master campus plan and space made for library or learning resource center services within the initial construction. Additionally, a student center or area where students may gather informally and where food is available shall be provided.

Quality Faculty Plan

Iowa law establishes the process for community colleges to plan for the hiring and professional development of faculty. Institutional quality faculty plans shall meet the standards of 281—IAC 24.5(5). The quality faculty plan (QFP) committee shall submit the plan to the board of directors for consideration, approval, and submittal to the department.

QFP Committee

The community college shall establish a quality faculty committee consisting of instructors and administrators to develop and maintain a plan for hiring and developing quality faculty. The committee shall have equal representatives of arts and sciences and career and technical faculty with no more than a simple majority of members of the same gender. Faculty shall be appointed by the certified employee organization representing faculty, if any, and administrators shall be appointed by the college's administration. If no faculty-certified employee organization representing faculty exists, the faculty shall be appointed by administration pursuant to Iowa Code section 260C.48(4).

Plan Requirements

The institutional QFP is applicable to all community college-employed faculty teaching credit courses, counselors, and media specialists. Counselors and media specialists are those who are classified as such in the institution's collective bargaining agreement or written policy. Institutional QFP requirements may be differentiated for each type of em-

ployee. The QFP shall, at a minimum, include the following nine components:

1. Plan maintenance. The quality faculty committee shall submit proposed plan modifications to the board of directors for consideration and approval. It is recommended that the plan be updated at least annually.
2. A determination of the faculty and staff to be included in the plan including, but not limited to, all instructors teaching college credit courses, counselors, and media specialists.
3. Orientation for new faculty. It is recommended that new faculty orientation be initiated within six months from the hiring date. It is recommended that the orientation of new faculty be flexible to meet current and future needs and provide options other than structured college courses for faculty to improve teaching strategies, curriculum development and evaluation strategies. It is recommended that the college consider developing a faculty mentoring program.
4. Continuing professional development for faculty. It is recommended that the plan clearly specify required components including time frame for continuing professional development for faculty. It is recommended that the plan include the number of hours, courses, workshops, professional and academic conferences or other experiences such as industry internships, cooperatives and exchange programs that faculty may use for continuing professional development. It is recommended that the plan include prescribed and elective topics such as discipline-specific content and educational trends and research. Examples of topics that may be considered include dealing with the complexities of learners, skills in teaching adults, curriculum development, assessment, evaluation, enhancing students' retention and success, reaching nontraditional and minority students, improving skills in implementing technology and applied learning, leadership development, and issues unique to a particular college. The institutional quality faculty plan shall include professional development components for all instructional staff, counselors, and media specialists and may include reciprocity features that facilitate movement from one college to another.
5. Procedures for accurate record keeping and documentation for plan monitoring. It is recommended that the plan identify the college officials or administrators responsible for the administration, record keeping and ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the plan. It is recommended the plan monitoring, evidence collected, and records maintained showing implementation of the plan be comprehensive in scope. It is recommended that the plan provide for the documentation that each faculty member appropriately possesses, attains or progresses toward attaining minimum competencies.
6. Consortium arrangements where appropriate, cost-effective and mutually beneficial. It is recommended that the plan provide an outline of existing and potential consortium arrangements including a description of the benefits, cost-effectiveness, and method of evaluating consortium services.
7. Specific activities that ensure that faculty attain and demonstrate instructional competencies and knowledge in their subject or technical areas. It is recommended that the plan identify faculty minimum competencies and explain the method or methods of determining and assessing competencies. It is recommended that the plan contain procedures for reporting faculty progress. It is recommended that faculty be notified at least once a year of their progress in attaining competencies. It is recommended that the plan include policies and provisions for length of provisional status for faculty who do not meet the minimum standards in Iowa Code section 260C.48. It is recommended that provisional status of individual faculty members not exceed five years.
8. Procedures for collection and maintenance of records demonstrating that each faculty member has attained or documented progress toward attaining minimum competencies. It is recommended that the plan specify data collection procedures that demonstrate how each full-time faculty member has attained or has documented progress toward attaining minimum competencies. It is recommended that the plan incorporate the current department of education MIS data submission requirements by which each college submits complete human resources data files electronically as a part of the college's year-end reporting.
9. Compliance with the faculty accreditation standards of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and with faculty standards required under specific programs offered by the community college that are accredited by other accrediting agencies. It is recommended that the plan provide for the uniform reports with substantiating data currently required for North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation.

Additional information may be found on the quality faculty section of the department's [website](#).

Senior Year Plus Programs

There are a variety of requirements for Senior Year Plus programs offered to high school students jointly enrolled in community college. These requirements are included in Iowa Code chapter 261E.

Currently, the department utilizes the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnership's accreditation process to ensure compliance with many statutory requirements.

The department [website](#) contains the [Senior Year Plus Guide for Educators and Educational Administrators](#) and additional department guidance on program requirements.

Other Requirements

Through the state accreditation process, the department may review compliance with other requirements in state and federal law; however, any issues identified will not impact the institution's accreditation status provided they do not impact the institution's fulfillment of state and HLC accreditation standards.

Other requirements that will be reviewed include, but are not limited to, equity requirements, data reporting requirements, and financial standards.

Recommendations related to non-accreditation state or federal requirements may or may not be included in the accreditation report presented to the State Board of Education.

Accredited Status and Addressing Deficiencies

The state accreditation process entails a robust evaluation of compliance with a plethora of state standards, including HLC criteria and additional state standards. This evaluation may identify deficiencies to be remedied.

If a college is cited for a deficiency, the deficiency is included in the accreditation report presented to the director of the Iowa Department of Education and the State Board of Education. The report includes a recommendation as to whether the community college shall remain accredited. The State Board of Education may grant accredited status, grant conditional accreditation, or deny accreditation.

Accreditation Granted

Institutions are accredited for five years, unless the State Board of Education determines that a lesser term is warranted. If a deficiency is identified, the board may grant accredited status. The department may set a timeline for the deficiency to be remedied (often 60-90 days). The department may request the institution provide documentation demonstrating the deficiency has been remedied or it may review the issue during the next scheduled accreditation visit. If the deficiency is remedied within the timeline provided, no additional report or action by the State Board is required. If the deficiency is not remedied, the department will discuss the issue with the college, and the director may recommend a focus evaluation.

Conditional Accreditation or Denial of Accreditation

If the board denies accreditation or grants conditional accredited status, the director, in cooperation with the board of directors of the community college, shall establish a plan prescribing procedures that must be taken to correct deficiencies in meeting the standards and criteria, including a deadline. The plan shall be submitted to the director within 45 days following the notice of accreditation denial or conditional accreditation.

The plan shall include components which address the correction of deficiencies, sharing or merger options,

discontinuance of specific programs or courses of study, and other options proposed by the State Board of Education or the accreditation review team to allow the college to meet the accreditation standards and criteria.

During the time specified in the plan for implementation, the college remains accredited. The review team shall revisit the college to evaluate whether deficiencies in the standards have been corrected. The team shall prepare a report with recommendations to the director and board. The State Board shall review the report, may request additional information, and shall determine whether the deficiencies have been corrected.

If a college fails to meet accreditation standards, as determined by the board, at least one year's notice shall be provided prior to removal of accredited status. The notice shall specify the reasons for removal of accreditation and shall be sent by certified mail or restricted certified mail to the chief executive officer of the college, as well as to each member of the institution's board of directors. If, during the year, the institution remedies the deficiency and the director is satisfied that the college will comply with accreditation standards in the future, the director shall continue accreditation and transmit notice of the action to the college by certified mail or restricted certified mail.

If deficiencies are not corrected, the college board of directors shall take one of the following actions within 60 days of removal of accreditation:

1. Merge the deficient program or programs with a program or programs from another accredited community college.
2. Contract with another accredited postsecondary institution for purposes of program delivery at the community college.
3. Discontinue the program or programs which have been identified as deficient.

The action of the director to remove state accreditation from a community college may be appealed to the State Board of Education, as provided in Iowa Code 260C.47(7).

Special Topics

In addition to the assurance component which determines compliance with state standards, the comprehensive state evaluation includes a continuous improvement component entailing a review of a special topic(s).

The special topic review is intended as an opportunity for an institution to receive input from one or more peer experts on a particular issue. The topic(s) is usually selected by the institution, but an additional topic(s) may be included at the direction of the director of the Iowa Department of Education or the State Board of Education. The review is purposefully separate from the assurance/compliance component of the evaluation and no sanctions may arise based on the team's findings or recommendations. Inclusion of a summary of the special topic(s) review in the final accreditation report is at the college's discretion.

While similar to the continuous improvement components of HLC reviews, the special topic(s) review is not intended to be duplicative. The institution may utilize the special topic(s) review to gain peer feedback about an institutional weakness or to get advice from an expert with a particularly strong or innovative program. The college may also utilize the special topic(s) review to delve further into the institution's quality initiative for HLC or into a strategic priority of the institution.

Special topics are addressed through a dialogue between college personnel and review team members with expertise in the subject area(s) and a review of relevant documents. The reviewers will offer consultative advice on germane aspects of the topic(s). The technical assistance provided is intended to be valuable in the continuous improvement process.



Recommendations are reported verbally during the evaluation team's exit interview. The recommendations or a brief summary of the review may be included in the final report, if desired by the institution.

The special topic(s) review is not included in interim evaluations or focus evaluations.

The State Accreditation Report

The final accreditation report is created by the state review team during and following the evaluation. The report is presented to the director and the State Board of Education with a recommendation regarding continued accredited status. The report's structure varies depending on whether the evaluation was comprehensive or interim in nature.

Comprehensive Evaluation

The components of the comprehensive evaluation accreditation report include an institutional overview, a summary of compliance with state standards, and other components.

Institutional Overview

The institutional overview portion of the accreditation report includes the following sections:

- A brief history of the institution
- An institutional profile prepared by the college highlighting unique activities

Assurance Summary

The assurance component of the state evaluation consists of a review of compliance with state standards and HLC criteria. This section of the accreditation report includes the following:

- Compliance with HLC criteria
- Compliance with additional state standards
- Adequacy of progress in addressing deficiencies, if any, identified during prior state evaluations

The report will clearly identify issues that must be addressed and provide the timeline set by the department for any identified deficiencies to be remedied.

Continuous Improvement Summary

The accreditation report may contain other items including a summary of findings from the continuous improvement component or recommendations from the review team regarding other state or federal requirements. These components may include following:

- A summary of key practices implemented within or as a result of the college's strategic plan that have advanced the vision, mission, and strategic priorities set forth by the institution
- A summary of the special topic(s) review *(if desired by the college)*
- Recommendations regarding compliance with non-accreditation state or federal requirements

The accreditation report submitted to the State Board of Education will not include findings or recommendations regarding special topics identified by the college (or the director), unless requested by the college.



Evaluation Team Recommendations

The report includes the evaluation team recommendations regarding the institution's continued accredited status.

Interim Evaluation

The accreditation report created following interim evaluations is streamlined due to the shortened review and narrower scope of the evaluation. The interim evaluation includes only the assurance summary and evaluation team recommendations.

Focus Evaluations

Focus evaluations do not result in an accreditation report unless one is requested by the director of the department or the State Board of Education. When a focus evaluation is conducted and a report is requested, the report's scope is limited to the identified issue(s) and the evaluation team recommendations.

The Accreditation Advisory Committee

The Iowa Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee is charged with continuously reviewing the state accreditation process and making recommendations to the department.

The committee was originally established as a taskforce to develop the state accreditation process. Since its establishment, it has been intimately involved with shaping the process and protocol.

In 2009, the committee worked closely with the department on a review of accreditation and accountability processes mandated by the legislature. To address key components of the review, four work teams were established. Upon completion of the teams' work, the committee developed recommendations for significant changes to the accreditation process for the 2010-2011 academic year. As in the past, department staff have benefited greatly from the willingness of Iowa's community college educators to share their views regarding accreditation and institutional improvement. The committee has been invaluable in providing feedback during the development of guidelines and in assisting with the development of review protocol.

The committee includes representatives from each of the state's 15 community colleges. Committee members are

drawn from the various functional units of community colleges, including presidents, chief academic officers, deans and directors, arts and sciences faculty, career and technical education faculty, economic developers, institutional researchers, student services administrators, and human resource directors.

Committee members are appointed by the director of the department and generally serve staggered three-year terms. Members may be reappointed for additional terms. Each year, the department will seek nominations from colleges with representatives whose terms are expiring. To ensure broad representation from a variety of functional areas, the department will request the nominations be drawn from selected groups based on the areas of expertise of members whose terms have expired. For example, if five members' terms expired including a human resources officer, a career and technical education instructor, an academic administrator, and a president, the department may request each college nominate one individual from each of the five categories. In appointing members, the department seeks to maintain gender balance and to include individuals with diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds or disabilities. The department also strives to ensure cross membership with the faculty advisory committee.

Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee Membership 2010-2011

College	Member	Position
Northeast Iowa Community College	Lian Chee Wee	Provost
North Iowa Area Community College	Mark Johnson	V.P., Academic Affairs
Iowa Lakes Community College	Mark Gruwell	Legal Studies, Assistant Professor
Northwest Iowa Community College	Jan Snyder	V.P, Institutional Advancement and Enrollment Services
Iowa Central Community College	Michelle Ramthum	English Faculty
Iowa Valley Community College District	Chris Duree	Acting Chancellor
Hawkeye Community College	Linda Allen	Acting President; V.P., Academic Affairs
Eastern Iowa Community College District	Laurie Hanson; Pat Keir	Dir., Institutional Effectiveness; Chancellor; IACCP Chair
Kirkwood Community College	Al Rowe	Exec. Dir., Institutional Effectiveness
Des Moines Area Community College	Margi Boord	Assoc. Exec. Dir., Human Resources
Western Iowa Tech Community College	Helen Lewis	English, Humanities Faculty
Iowa Western Community College	Bill Barrett	Business-Marketing Faculty
Southwestern Iowa Community College	Barb Crittenden; Dave Neas	President; English Faculty
Indian Hills Community College	Marlene Sprouse	V.P., Academic Affairs
Southeastern Community College	Joan Williams	V.P., Student Services

State Laws Governing Accreditation

Iowa's process for accrediting community colleges is mandated by state law. The following are the sections of Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code pertaining to the state accreditation process and standards. Some state standards such as career and technical education program evaluation and Senior Year Plus programs are not detailed in these sections but reference other sections.

Iowa Code [260C.47](#)

Accreditation of community college programs.

1. The state board of education shall establish an accreditation process for community college programs by July 1, 1997. The process shall be jointly developed and agreed upon by the department of education and the community colleges. The state accreditation process shall be integrated with the accreditation process of the north central association of colleges and schools, including the evaluation cycle, the self-study process, and the criteria for evaluation, which shall incorporate the standards for community colleges developed under section [260C.48](#); and shall identify and make provision for the needs of the state that are not met by the association's accreditation process. For the academic year commencing July 1, 1998, and in succeeding school years, the department of education shall use a two-component process for the continued accreditation of community college programs. Beginning July 1, 2006, the state accreditation process shall incorporate the standards developed pursuant to section [260C.48](#), subsection 4.

a. The first component consists of submission of required data by the community colleges and annual monitoring by the department of education of all community colleges for compliance with state program evaluation requirements adopted by the state board.

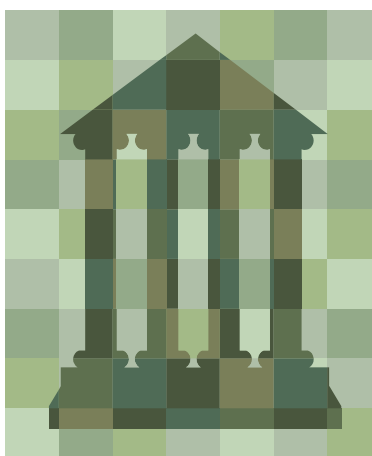
b. The second component consists of the use of an accreditation team appointed by the director of the department of education, to conduct an evaluation, including an on-site visit of each community college, with a comprehensive evaluation to occur during the same year as the evaluation by the north central association of colleges and schools, and an interim evaluation midway between comprehensive evaluations. The number and composition of the accreditation team shall be determined by the director, but the team shall include members of the department of education staff and community college staff members from community colleges other than the community college that conducts the programs being evaluated for accreditation. Beginning July 1, 2006, the accreditation team shall monitor the quality faculty plan implemented by each community college pursuant to section [260C.36](#).

c. Rules adopted by the state board shall include provisions for coordination of the accreditation process under this section with activities of accreditation associations, which are designed to avoid duplication in the accreditation process.

2. Prior to a visit to a community college, members of the accreditation team shall have access to the program audit report filed with the department for that community college. After a visit to a community college, the accreditation team shall determine whether the accreditation standards for a program have been met and shall make a report to the director and the state board,

together with a recommendation as to whether the program of the community college should remain accredited. The accreditation team shall report strengths and weaknesses, if any, for each program standard and shall advise the community college of available resources and technical assistance to further enhance strengths and improve areas of weakness. A community college may respond to the accreditation team's report.

3. The state board shall determine whether a program of a community college shall remain accredited. If the state board determines that a program of a community college does not meet accreditation standards, the director of the department of



education, in cooperation with the board of directors of the community college, shall establish a plan prescribing the procedures that must be taken to correct deficiencies in meeting the program standards, and shall establish a deadline date for correction of the deficiencies. The deadline for correction of deficiencies under a plan shall be no later than June 30 of the year

following the on-site visit of the accreditation team. The plan is subject to approval of the state board. Plans shall include components which address meeting program deficiencies, sharing or merger options, discontinuance of specific programs or courses of study, and any other options proposed by the state board or the accreditation team to allow the college to meet the program standards.

4. During the time specified in the plan for its implementation, the community college program remains accredited. The accreditation team shall revisit the community college and shall determine whether the deficiencies in the standards for the program have been corrected and shall make a report and recommendation to the director and the state board. The state board shall review the report and recommendation, may request additional information, and shall determine whether the deficiencies in the program have been corrected.

5. If the deficiencies have not been corrected in a program of a community college, the community college board shall take one of the following actions within sixty days from removal of accreditation:

- Merge the deficient program or programs with a program or programs from another accredited community college.
- Contract with another educational institution for purposes of program delivery at the community college.
- Discontinue the program or programs which have been identified as deficient.

6. The director of the department of education shall give a community college which has a program which fails to meet accreditation standards at least one year's notice prior to removal of accreditation of the program. The notice shall be given by

certified mail or restricted certified mail addressed to the superintendent of the community college and shall specify the reasons for removal of accreditation of the program. The notice shall also be sent by ordinary mail to each member of the board of directors of the community college. Any good faith error or failure to comply with the notice requirements shall not affect the validity of any action by the director. If, during the year, the community college remedies the reasons for removal of accreditation of the program and satisfies the director that the community college will comply with the accreditation standards for that program in the future, the director shall continue the accreditation of the program of the community college and shall transmit notice of the action to the community college by certified mail or restricted certified mail.

7. The action of the director to remove a community college's accreditation of the program may be appealed to the state board. At the hearing, the community college may be represented by counsel and may present evidence. The state board may provide for the hearing to be recorded or reported. If requested by the community college at least ten days before the hearing, the state board shall provide for the hearing to be recorded or reported at the expense of the community college, using any reasonable method specified by the community college. Within ten days after the hearing, the state board shall render a written decision, and shall affirm, modify, or vacate the action or proposed action to remove the college's accreditation of the program. Action by the state board is final agency action for purposes of chapter 17A.

Iowa Code [260C.48](#)

Standards for Accrediting Community College Programs

1. The state board shall develop standards and rules for the accreditation of community college programs. Except as provided in this subsection and subsection 4, standards developed shall be general in nature so as to apply to more than one specific program of instruction. With regard to community college-employed instructors, the standards adopted shall at a minimum require that community college instructors who are under contract for at least half-time or more, and by July 1, 2011, all instructors, meet the following requirements:

a. Instructors in the subject area of career and technical education shall be registered, certified, or licensed in the occupational area in which the state requires registration, certification, or licensure, and shall hold the appropriate registration, certificate, or license for the occupational area in which the instructor is teaching, and shall meet either of the following qualifications:

(1) A baccalaureate or graduate degree in the area or a related area of study or occupational area in which the instructor is teaching classes.

(2) Special training and at least six thousand hours of recent and relevant work experience in the occupational area or related occupational area in which the instructor teaches classes if the instructor possesses less than a baccalaureate degree.

b. Instructors in the subject area of arts and sciences shall meet either of the following qualifications:

(1) Possess a master's degree from a regionally accredited graduate school, and has successfully completed a minimum of twelve credit hours of graduate level courses in each field of instruction in

which the instructor is teaching classes.

(2) Have two or more years of successful experience in a professional field or area in which the instructor is teaching classes and in which postbaccalaureate recognition or professional licensure is necessary for practice, including but not limited to the fields or areas of accounting, engineering, law, law enforcement, and medicine.

2. Standards developed shall include a provision that the standard academic workload for an instructor in arts and science courses shall be fifteen credit hours per school term, and the maximum academic workload for any instructor shall be sixteen credit hours per school term, for classes taught during the normal school day. In addition thereto, any faculty member may teach a course or courses at times other than the regular school week, involving total class instruction time equivalent to not more than a three-credit-hour course. The total workload for such instructors shall not exceed the equivalent of eighteen credit hours per school term.

3. Standards developed shall include provisions requiring equal access in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with special education needs. The provisions shall include a requirement that students with special education needs shall receive instruction in the least restrictive environment with access to the full range of program offerings at a college, through, but not limited to, adaptation of curriculum, instruction, equipment, facilities, career guidance, and counseling services.

4. Commencing July 1, 2006, standards relating to quality assurance of faculty and ongoing quality professional development shall be the accreditation standards of the north central association of colleges and schools and the faculty standards required under specific programs offered by the community college that are accredited by other accrediting agencies.

Iowa Administrative Code [Chapter 24](#) (281—IAC 24 (260C)) Community College Accreditation

281—24.1(260C) Purpose. As set forth in Iowa Code section 260C.1, the purpose of accreditation of Iowa's community colleges is to confirm that each college is offering, to the greatest extent possible, educational opportunities and services, when applicable, but not be limited to:

1. The first two years of college work including preprofessional education.

2. Career and technical training.

3. Programs for in-service training and retraining of workers.

4. Programs for high school completion for students of post-high school age.

5. Programs for all students of high school age, who may best serve themselves by enrolling for career and technical training, while also enrolled in a local high school, public or private.

6. Programs for students of high school age to provide advanced college placement courses not taught at a student's high school while the student is also enrolled in the high school.

7. Student personnel services.

8. Community services.

9. Career and technical education for persons who have academic, socioeconomic, or other disabilities which prevent succeeding in regular career and technical education programs.

10. Training, retraining, and all necessary preparation for productive employment of all citizens.

11. Career and technical training for persons who are not enrolled in a high school and who have not completed high school.

12. Developmental education for persons who are academically or personally underprepared to succeed in their program of study.

281—24.2(260C) Scope. Each community college is subject to accreditation by the state board of education, as provided in Iowa Code section 260C.47. The state board of education shall grant accreditation if a community college meets the standards established in this chapter.

281—24.3(260C) Definitions. For purposes of interpreting rule 281—24.5(260C), the following definitions shall apply:

“Department.” Department refers to the Iowa department of education.

“Director.” Director refers to the director of the department.

“Field of instruction.” The determination of what constitutes each field of instruction should be based on accepted practices of regionally accredited two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

“Full-time instructor.” An instructor is considered to be full-time if the community college board of directors designates the instructor as full-time. Consideration of determining full-time status shall be based on local board-approved contracts.

“Higher Learning Commission.” The Higher Learning Commission is the accrediting authority within the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Iowa Code sections 260C.47 and 260C.48 require that the state accreditation process be integrated with that of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

“Instructors meeting minimum requirements.” A community college instructor meeting the minimum requirements of Iowa Code Supplement section 260C.48(1) as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, House File 2679, is an instructor under contract for at least half-time or more teaching college credit courses. Beginning July 1, 2011, a community college instructor meeting the minimum requirements is an instructor teaching college credit courses. Credit courses shall meet requirements as specified in rule 281—21.2(260C), and meet program requirements for college parallel, career and technical education, and career-option programs as specified in rule 281—21.4(260C) and Iowa Code chapter 260C.

“Joint enrollment.” Joint enrollment refers to any community college credit course offered to students enrolled in a secondary school. Courses offered for joint enrollment include courses delivered through contractual agreements between school districts and community colleges, courses delivered through the postsecondary enrollment options program, and college credit courses taken independently by tuition-paying secondary school students.

“Minimum of 12 graduate hours.” Full-time arts and sciences instructors must possess a master’s degree and complete a minimum of 12 graduate hours in their field of instruction. The 12 graduate hours may be within the master’s degree requirements or independent of the master’s degree, but all hours must be in the instructor’s field of instruction.

“Organization.” Organization is synonymous with community college and is used in this chapter to align with accreditation terminology used by the Higher Learning Commission.

“Recent and relevant work experience.” An hour of recent and relevant work experience is equal to 60 minutes. The community college shall determine what constitutes recent and relevant work experience that relates to the instructor’s occupational and teaching area. The college shall maintain documentation of the

instructor’s educational and work experience.

281—24.4(260C) Accreditation components and criteria—Higher Learning Commission. In order to be accredited by the state board of education and maintain accreditation status, a community college must meet the accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission and additional state standards. Accreditation shall be maintained either by the Program to Evaluate Academic Quality (PEAQ) or the alternative Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) process. The Higher Learning Commission criteria for accreditation are as follows:

24.4(1) Mission and integrity. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

a. The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

b. In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

c. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

d. The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

e. The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

24.4(2) Preparing for the future. The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

a. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

b. The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening the program’s quality in the future.

c. The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

d. All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing the organization’s capacity to fulfill that mission.

24.4(3) Student learning and effective teaching. The organization provides evidence of student learning and effective teaching that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

a. The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

b. The organization values and supports effective teaching.

c. The organization creates effective learning environments.

d. The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

24.4(4) Acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

a. The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it

values a life of learning.

b. The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

c. The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

d. The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

24.4(5) *Engagement and service.* As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

a. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

b. The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

c. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on the organization for service.

d. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

24.4(6) *Documentation.* Documents and materials provided in accordance with the accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission shall also be provided to the department for the state accreditation process.

281—24.5(260C) Accreditation components and

criteria—additional state standards. To be granted accreditation by the state board of education, an Iowa community college shall also meet additional standards pertaining to minimum or quality assurance standards for faculty (Iowa Code section 260C.48(1)); faculty load (Iowa Code section 260C.48(2)); special needs (Iowa Code section 260C.48(3)); career and technical education program evaluation (Iowa Code section 258.4(7)); quality faculty plan (Iowa Code section 260C.36); and senior year plus programs (Iowa Code chapter 261E).

24.5(1) *Faculty.* Community college-employed instructors who are under contract for at least half-time or more, and by July 1, 2011, all instructors who teach in career and technical education or arts and sciences shall meet minimum standards. In accordance with Iowa Code Supplement section 260C.48(1) as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, House File 2679, standards shall at a minimum require that community college instructors who are under contract for at least half-time or more, and by July 1, 2011, all instructors meet the following requirements:

a. Instructors in the subject area of career and technical education shall be registered, certified, or licensed in the occupational area in which the state requires registration, certification, or licensure, and shall hold the appropriate registration, certificate, or license for the occupational area in which the instructor is teaching, and shall meet either of the following qualifications:

(1) A baccalaureate or graduate degree in the area or a related area of study or occupational area in which the instructor is teaching classes.

(2) Special training and at least 6,000 hours of recent and relevant work experience in the occupational area or related occupational area in which the instructor teaches classes if the instructor possesses less than a baccalaureate degree.

b. Instructors in the subject area of arts and sciences shall

meet either of the following qualifications:

(1) Possess a master's degree from a regionally accredited graduate school, and have successfully completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graduate level courses in each field of instruction in which the instructor is teaching classes.

(2) Have two or more years of successful experience in a professional field or area in which the instructor is teaching classes and in which postbaccalaureate recognition or professional licensure is necessary for practice, including but not limited to the fields or areas of accounting, engineering, law, law enforcement, and medicine.

c. Developmental education and adult education instructors employed half-time or more may or may not meet minimum requirements depending on their teaching assignments and the relevancy of standards to the courses they are teaching and the transferability of such courses. If instructors are teaching credit courses reported in arts and sciences or career and technical education, it is recommended that these instructors meet minimum standards set forth in 281—subrule 21.3(1), paragraph “a” or “b.” By July 1, 2011, all instructors teaching credit courses shall meet minimum standards.

24.5(2) *Faculty load.*

a. College parallel or transfer. The full-time teaching load of an instructor in college parallel or transfer programs shall not exceed a maximum of 16 credit hours within a traditional semester or the equivalent. An instructor may also have a teaching assignment outside of the normal school hours, provided the instructor consents to this additional assignment and the total workload does not exceed the equivalent of 18 credit hours within a traditional semester or the equivalent thereof.

b. Career and technical education. The full-time teaching load of an instructor in career and technical education programs shall not exceed 6 hours per day, and an aggregate of 30 hours per week or the equivalent. An instructor may also teach the equivalent of an additional 3 credit hours, provided the instructor consents to this additional assignment. When the teaching assignment includes classroom subjects (nonlaboratory), consideration shall be given to establishing the teaching load more in conformity with that of paragraph 24.5(2)“a.”

24.5(3) *Special needs.* Community colleges shall provide equal access in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities shall be given access to the full range of course offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations.

24.5(4) *Career and technical education evaluation.* The director of the department shall annually review at least 20 percent of the approved career and technical programs as a basis for continuing approval. The community college career and technical program review and evaluation system must ensure that the programs:

a. Are compatible with educational reform efforts.

b. Are capable of responding to technological change and innovation.

c. Meet educational needs of the students and employment community, including students with disabilities, both male and female students, and students from diverse racial and ethnic groups.

d. Enable students enrolled to perform the minimum competencies independently.

e. Are articulated/integrated with the total school curriculum.

f. Enable students with a secondary career and technical background to pursue other educational interests in a postsecondary setting, if desired.

g. Provide students with support services and eliminate access barriers to education and employment for both traditional and nontraditional students, men and women, persons from diverse racial and ethnic groups, and persons with disabilities.

24.5(5) *Facilities, parking lots and roads.*

a. Facilities master planning. Each community college shall present evidence of adequate planning, including a board-approved facilities plan. Planning includes tentative program approval, a master campus plan, written educational specifications, site plot showing location of proposed and existing facilities, elevations and floor plans.

b. Accessibility and safety. All new or remodeled facilities (buildings and programs offered in such facilities) and services in such facilities shall be made functional and usable for persons with special needs and shall comply with Iowa Code chapter 104A and the Americans With Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, and address issues of campus safety and security as required by Iowa Code chapter 260C and by the federal Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f). All parking areas and roads shall comply with all state and federal rules and regulations dealing with roads, parking ramps, and accessibility requirements.

c. Adequate facilities. All administrative facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and related facilities shall be educationally adequate for the purpose for which they are designed.

d. Library or learning resource center. A library or learning resource center shall be planned as part of the master campus plan and space made for library or learning resource center services within the initial construction.

e. Student center. An area of the college shall be provided where students may gather informally and where food is available.

24.5(6) *Strategic planning.* The community college shall prepare a five-year strategic plan to guide the college and its decision making. Consideration shall be given to the five-year statewide strategic plan, as required by Iowa Code section 256.31(4)(a), in the development of the college's strategic plan.

24.5(7) *Quality faculty plan.* The community college shall establish a quality faculty committee consisting of instructors and administrators to develop and maintain a plan for hiring and developing quality faculty. The committee shall have equal representatives of arts and sciences and career and technical faculty with no more than a simple majority of members of the same gender. Faculty shall be appointed by the certified employee organization representing faculty, if any, and administrators shall be appointed by the college's administration. If no faculty-certified employee organization representing faculty exists, the faculty shall be appointed by administration pursuant to Iowa Code section 260C.48(4). The committee shall submit the plan to the board of directors for consideration, approval and submittal to the department of education.

a. For purposes of this subrule, the following definitions shall apply.

(1) "Counselor" means those who are classified as counselors as defined in the college's collective bargaining agreement or written policy.

(2) "Media specialist" means those who are classified as media specialists as defined in the college's collective bargaining agreement or written policy.

b. The institutional quality faculty plan is applicable to all community college-employed faculty teaching college credit courses, counselors, and media specialists. The plan requirements may be differentiated for each type of employee. The plan shall include, at a minimum, each of the following components:

(1) Plan maintenance. The quality faculty committee shall submit proposed plan modifications to the board of directors for consideration and approval. It is recommended that the plan be updated at least annually.

(2) A determination of the faculty and staff to be included in the plan including, but not limited to, all instructors teaching college credit courses, counselors, and media specialists.

(3) Orientation for new faculty. It is recommended that new faculty orientation be initiated within six months from the hiring date. It is recommended that the orientation of new faculty be flexible to meet current and future needs and provide options other than structured college courses for faculty to improve teaching strategies, curriculum development and evaluation strategies. It is recommended that the college consider developing a faculty mentoring program.

(4) Continuing professional development for faculty. It is recommended that the plan clearly specify required components including time frame for continuing professional development for faculty. It is recommended that the plan include the number of hours, courses, workshops, professional and academic conferences or other experiences such as industry internships, cooperatives and exchange programs that faculty may use for continuing professional development. It is recommended that the plan include prescribed and elective topics such as discipline-specific content and educational trends and research. Examples of topics that may be considered include dealing with the complexities of learners, skills in teaching adults, curriculum development, assessment, evaluation, enhancing students' retention and success, reaching nontraditional and minority students, improving skills in implementing technology and applied learning, leadership development, and issues unique to a particular college. The institutional quality faculty plan shall include professional development components for all instructional staff, counselors, and media specialists and may include reciprocity features that facilitate movement from one college to another.

(5) Procedures for accurate record keeping and documentation for plan monitoring. It is recommended that the plan identify the college officials or administrators responsible for the administration, record keeping and ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the plan. It is recommended the plan monitoring, evidence collected, and records maintained showing implementation of the plan be comprehensive in scope. It is recommended that the plan provide for the documentation that each faculty member appropriately possesses, attains or progresses toward attaining

minimum competencies.

(6) Consortium arrangements where appropriate, cost-effective and mutually beneficial. It is recommended that the plan provide an outline of existing and potential consortium arrangements including a description of the benefits, cost-effectiveness, and method of evaluating consortium services.

(7) Specific activities that ensure that faculty attain and demonstrate instructional competencies and knowledge in their subject or technical areas. It is recommended that the plan identify faculty minimum competencies and explain the method or methods of determining and assessing competencies. It is recommended that the plan contain procedures for reporting faculty progress. It is recommended that faculty be notified at least once a year of their progress in attaining competencies. It is recommended that the plan include policies and provisions for length of provisional status for faculty who do not meet the minimum standards in Iowa Code section 260C.48. It is recommended that provisional status of individual faculty members not exceed five years.

(8) Procedures for collection and maintenance of records demonstrating that each faculty member has attained or documented progress toward attaining minimum competencies. It is recommended that the plan specify data collection procedures that demonstrate how each full-time faculty member has attained or has documented progress toward attaining minimum competencies. It is recommended that the plan incorporate the current department of education management information system data submission requirements by which each college submits complete human resources data files electronically as a part of the college's year-end reporting.

(9) Compliance with the faculty accreditation standards of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and with faculty standards required under specific programs offered by the community college that are accredited by other accrediting agencies. It is recommended that the plan provide for the uniform reports with substantiating data currently required for North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation.

c. The department of education shall notify the community college when the department requires that a modified quality faculty plan be submitted. The department shall review the plan during the state accreditation on-site visits to ensure each community college's compliance and progress in implementing a quality faculty plan as approved by the local board of directors. The department shall review the following:

(1) Documents submitted by the college that demonstrate that the plan includes each component required by paragraph "b" of this subrule.

(2) Documentation submitted by the college that the board of directors approved the plan.

(3) Documentation submitted by the college that the college is implementing the approved plan, including, but not limited to, evidence of plan monitoring, evaluation and updating; evidence that the faculty has attained, or is progressing toward attaining, minimum competencies

and standards contained in Iowa Code section 260C.48 as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, House File 2679, and 2007 Iowa Acts, Senate File 588; evidence that faculty members have been notified of their progress toward attaining minimum competencies and standards; and evidence that the college meets the minimum accreditation requirements for faculty required by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

(4) Documentation that the college administration encourages the continued development of faculty potential as defined in Iowa Code Supplement section 260C.36 as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, House File 2679.

(5) Documentation of the human resources report submitted by the college through the department's community college management information system.

24.5(8) *Senior year plus*. The community college shall provide access to joint enrollment opportunities for high school age students. Each college shall comply with the appropriate standards defined in Iowa Code chapter 261E.

281—24.6(260C) Accreditation process.

24.6(1) *Components*. The community college accreditation process shall include the following components:

a. Each community college shall submit information on an annual basis to the department of education to comply with program evaluation requirements adopted by the state board of education.

b. The department of education shall conduct an on-site accreditation evaluation of each community college during the same academic year as the evaluation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. An interim evaluation midway between comprehensive evaluations shall also be conducted. The department shall have the authority to conduct focus evaluation visits as needed.

24.6(2) *Accreditation team*. The size and composition of the accreditation team shall be determined by the director of the department, but the team shall include members of the department of education staff and staff members from community colleges other than the community college being evaluated for accreditation, and any other technical experts as needed.

24.6(3) *Accreditation team action*. After a visit to a community college, the accreditation team shall evaluate whether the accreditation standards have been met and shall make a report to the director of the department and the state board of education, together with a recommendation as to whether the community college shall remain accredited. The accreditation team shall report strengths and opportunities for improvement, if any, for each standard and criterion and shall advise the community college of available resources and technical assistance to further enhance strengths and address areas for improvement. A community college may respond to the accreditation team's report.

24.6(4) *State board of education consideration of accreditation*. The state board of education shall determine whether a community college shall remain accredited. Approval of accreditation for a community college by the state board of education shall be based upon the recommendation of the director of the department after study of the factual and evaluative evidence on record pursuant to the standards and criteria described in this chapter, and based upon the timely submission of information required by the department of education in a format provided by the department of education. With the approval of the director of the

department, a focus visit may be conducted if the situation at a particular college warrants such a visit.

a. *Accreditation granted.* Continuation of accreditation, if granted, shall be for a term consistent with the term of accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; however, approval for a lesser term may be granted by the state board of education if the board determines that conditions so warrant.

b. *Accreditation denied or conditional accreditation.* If the state board of education denies accreditation or grants conditional accreditation, the director of the department of education, in cooperation with the board of directors of the community college, shall establish a plan prescribing the procedures that must be taken to correct deficiencies in meeting the standards and criteria and shall establish a deadline for correction of the deficiencies. The plan shall be submitted to the director within 45 days following the notice of accreditation denial or conditional accreditation. The plan shall include components which address correcting deficiencies, sharing or merger options, discontinuance of specific programs or courses of study, and any other options proposed by the state board of education or the accreditation team to allow the college to meet the accreditation standards and criteria.

c. *Implementation of plan.* During the time specified in the plan for its implementation, the community college remains accredited. The accreditation team shall revisit the community college to evaluate whether the deficiencies in the standards or criteria have been corrected and shall make a report and recommendation to the director and the state board of education. The state board of education shall review the report and recommendation, may request additional information, and shall determine whether the

deficiencies have been corrected.

d. *Removal of accreditation.* The director shall give a community college which fails to meet accreditation standards, as determined by the state board of education, at least one year's notice prior to removal of accreditation. The notice shall be sent by certified mail or restricted certified mail addressed to the chief executive officer of the community college and shall specify the reasons for removal of accreditation. The notice shall also be sent to each member of the board of directors of the community college. If, during the year, the community college remedies the reasons for removal of accreditation and satisfies the director that the community college will comply with the accreditation standards and criteria in the future, the director shall continue the accreditation and shall transmit notice of the action to the community college by certified mail or restricted certified mail.

e. *Failure to correct deficiencies.* If the deficiencies have not been corrected in a program of a community college, the community college board of directors shall take one of the following actions within 60 days from removal of accreditation:

(1) Merge the deficient program or programs with a program or programs from another accredited community college.

(2) Contract with another accredited postsecondary educational institution for purposes of program delivery at the community college.

(3) Discontinue the program or programs which have been identified as deficient.

f. *Appeal process provided.* The action of the director to remove the state accreditation of a community college program may be appealed to the state board of education as provided in Iowa Code section 260C.47, subsection 7.



COMMUNITY COLLEGES &
WORKFORCE PREPARATION